

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

FOR

GAMING DEVICE HAVING A SELECTABLE COMBINATION BONUS GAME

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**GAMING DEVICE HAVING AN ACCUMULATED AWARD SELECTION
BONUS SCHEME**

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PRIORITY CLAIM

This application is a continuation-in-part of and claims the benefit of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/963,721, filed September 26, 2001, which incorporated herein by reference.

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CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is related to the following commonly-owned co-pending patent applications: "GAMING DEVICE HAVING A BONUS SCHEME WITH MULTIPLE SELECTION GROUPS," Serial No. 09/656,702, Attorney Docket 15 No. 0112300-008, now U.S. Patent No. 6,439,995; "GAMING DEVICE WITH BONUS SCHEME HAVING MULTIPLE AWARD LEVELS," Serial No. 09/602,140, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-023; "GAMING DEVICE HAVING BONUS SCHEME WITH INCREMENTAL VALUE DISCLOSURE," Serial No. 09/627,198, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-022, now pending; 20 "GAMING DEVICE WITH BONUS SCHEME PROVIDING INCREASED REWARD FOR SELECTING RELATED SYMBOLS," Serial No. 09/605,023, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-025, now pending; "GAMING DEVICE HAVING A MULTIPLE SELECTION GROUP BONUS ROUND," Serial No. 09/605,107, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-031, now U.S. Patent No. 6,511,375.; "GAMING 25 DEVICE HAVING APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR PRODUCING AN AWARD THROUGH AWARD ELIMINATION OR REPLACEMENT," Serial No. 09/686,283, Attorney Docket 0112300-139, now U.S. Patent No.

6,413,161; "GAMING DEVICE HAVING RELATED MULTI-GAME BONUS SCHEME," Serial No. 09/688,972, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-158, now pending; "GAMING DEVICE INCLUDING AWARDS THAT GENERATE ANOTHER AWARD," Serial No. 09/605,107, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-5, now pending; "GAMING DEVICE HAVING A RE-TRIGGERING SYMBOLS BONUS SCHEME," Serial No. 09/981,133, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-455, now pending; "GAMING DEVICE WITH A BONUS SCHEME HAVING REPEATED SELECTION OF VALUE SETS WITH OPTION TO SAVE VALUES," Serial No. 09/684,533, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-469, now U.S. Patent No. 6,464,582; "GAMING DEVICE HAVING A BONUS SCHEME INCLUDING A PLURALITY OF SELECTION GROUPS WITH WIN-GROUP OUTCOMES," Serial No. 09/981,084, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-473, now pending; "GAMING DEVICE HAVING DUAL EVALUATION SCHEME," Serial No. 09/687,689, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-474, now pending; "GAMING DEVICE HAVING AN ELEMENT AND ELEMENT GROUP SELECTION AND ELIMINATION BONUS SCHEME," Serial No. 09/689,381, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-478, now pending; "GAMING DEVICE HAVING ACHIEVEMENT CRITERIA FOR ADVANCEMENT," Serial No. 09/960,784, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-485, now pending; "APPARATUS AND 20 METHOD FOR MODIFYING GENERATED VALUES TO DETERMINE AN AWARD IN A GAMING DEVICE," Serial No. 09/957,018, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-581, now pending; "GAMING DEVICE HAVING AN AWARD DISTRIBUTOR AND AN AWARD ACCUMULATOR BONUS GAME," Serial No. 09/682,369, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-766, now pending; "GAMING 25 DEVICE HAVING A RE-TRIGGERING SYMBOL BONUS SCHEME WITH A

BONUS SYMBOL ACCUMULATOR," Serial No. 10/071,441, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-964, now pending; "GAMING DEVICE HAVING AN INDICATOR SELECTION WITH PROBABILITY-BASED OUTCOME," Serial No. 09/990,693, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-965, now pending; and 5 "GAMING DEVICE WITH SIGNIFIED SYMBOLS," Serial No. 09/990,484, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-966, now pending.

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DESCRIPTION

The present invention relates in general to a gaming device, and more particularly to a gaming device having an accumulated award selection bonus scheme wherein the accumulated award includes a plurality of other awards.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Gaming device manufacturers constantly strive to make gaming devices that provide as much enjoyment and excitement to players as possible. Gaming devices such as slot machines, having primary and secondary or 5 bonus games or schemes are well known. Providing a bonus game in which a player has an opportunity to win potentially large awards or credits in addition to the awards associated with the base or primary game of the gaming device is one way to enhance player enjoyment and excitement.

Gaming devices having bonus games generally employ a triggering 10 event that occurs during play of the base game. The triggering event temporarily stalls or halts the base game play and enables a player to enter a second, different game, which is the bonus game. The player plays the bonus game, likely receives an award, and returns to the base game. In most instances, the bonus game is relatively short in relation to the time that the 15 player spends repeatedly playing the base game.

Known gaming machines have bonus schemes in which the player has one or more opportunities to choose a particular selection or symbol from a group of symbols. When a player chooses a symbol, the game will either award the player a bonus value or terminate the bonus round. The outcome, 20 thus, depends upon the particular symbol selected by the player. In such games, when the player selects a symbol that awards a bonus value (hereinafter referred to as "award indicator"), the player receives the value, and the player has another chance to select another symbol. Each time the player selects an award indicator, the game prompts the player to make another 25 selection. The bonus game continues and the player may choose another

symbol. The player then selects another symbol, and this process continues until the player selects a symbol which terminates the bonus game (hereinafter referred to as a “terminator”). When the player selects a terminator, typically the game ends and the player collects any bonus values that the player 5 accumulated in that bonus round. In this type of game, the potential amount of the award is limited by the terminators.

While such bonus schemes offer advantages in player appeal and excitement, there is a continuing need to develop new types of bonus games that allow players to accumulate larger awards and increase the level of player 10 excitement and enjoyment.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates in general to a gaming device, and more particularly to a gaming device having an accumulated award selection bonus 15 scheme. The game displays a plurality of selections to the player. In one embodiment, an award or an accumulated award is associated with each selection. The game provides the player with a number of picks of the selections. If the player picks a selection that has an associated award, the player receives that associated award. If the player picks a selection that has 20 an accumulated award, the player receives an accumulated award based on a plurality of selections related to or associated with the accumulated award selection. In one embodiment, the accumulated award includes the awards that are associated with the selections that are directly adjacent to the accumulated award selection. The player continues to pick selections until the 25 player has no remaining picks. In one alternative embodiment, the game

includes one or more terminators associated with the selections. In this embodiment, the player picks selections until there are no picks remaining or until the player selects a selection having a terminator associated with the selections. In one embodiment, the selections are arranged in a grid wherein

5 the accumulated award includes the awards associated with the selections in the grid which are adjacent to the accumulated award selections.

In a further embodiment, the game displays a plurality of sequential selection sets to a player. The selection sets include awards, accumulated awards, transformers, promoters and terminators. As indicated above, an

10 accumulated award provides several awards to the player where the awards are a combination of awards from associated selections. As indicated above, a terminator ends the game. A transformer changes or transforms a terminator into an accumulated award. If a player picks the transformer selection, the player keeps or banks the transformer until a terminator is
15 picked. When a terminator is picked, the transformer changes the terminator into an accumulated award. A promoter enables a player to skip a selection set and make another pick from the plurality of selections in the next or a subsequent selection set. The player's goal is to obtain as many awards as possible before picking a selection having an associated terminator.

20 In an alternative embodiment, the present invention relates in general to a gaming device having a game such a secondary or bonus game, and more particularly to a gaming device having a game including a plurality of matingly connected indicators and a plurality of selections including those indicators. In one alternative embodiment, the indicators are matingly connected puzzle
25 pieces which form a puzzle. Initially, the indicators associated with the

selections are masked or hidden to the player. The player picks the selections and the gaming device reveals one or more indicators such as one or more puzzle pieces corresponding to an indicator such as a puzzle piece in the indicator group such as the puzzle. Once a puzzle piece is revealed, the 5 corresponding puzzle piece is revealed along with any awards associated with that puzzle piece. The player continues to pick selections until the player obtains a designated combination or section of puzzle pieces. After completing the combination, the player receives any awards associated with the puzzle pieces in the combination. In one embodiment, the player also 10 receives the awards associated with the matingly connected puzzle pieces which were previously selected by the player.

More specifically, in one embodiment, several puzzle pieces and selections are displayed to a player. The puzzle pieces each include at least one award such as values, credits, multipliers, free picks, free spins, free 15 games, game elements or any other desired values. A predetermined or designated combination of puzzle pieces is required to complete the game. The combinations may be rows, columns, or any other suitable section of the puzzle. The player picks selections attempting to obtain desirable combinations of the puzzle pieces (i.e., combinations of puzzle pieces resulting 20 in larger awards) and avoid obtaining undesirable combinations (i.e., combinations of puzzle pieces resulting in smaller awards). After each pick, a puzzle piece is revealed in the puzzle. Furthermore, an award associated with that puzzle piece is displayed to the player. The player continues to pick selections until they obtain a designated combination or section of the puzzle 25 piece. Once the player obtains a designated combination or section of the

puzzle piece, the game ends. In one embodiment, the player is awarded the total value of the matingly connected puzzle pieces in the completely designated combination.

In another alternative embodiment of the present invention, the player 5 receives additional awards for obtaining a designated combination. Once the player obtains a combination, the player is awarded the total value of the awards associated with the picked puzzle pieces in that combination. In addition, the player receives the total value of any awards associated with any puzzle pieces that are matingly connected to the completed combination. 10 Thus, in this embodiment, the player is not only limited to the awards associated with the designated combination. The player also receives the awards associated with any matingly connected pieces to that designated combination that were picked by the player.

In another embodiment, the indicator display or puzzle includes at least 15 one puzzle piece which is repeated two or more times in the puzzle. In other words, the puzzle pieces in the puzzle include a predefined or predetermined relationship. In one aspect of this embodiment, the puzzle includes two or more identical puzzle pieces. In this embodiment a single selection may reveal one puzzle piece or a plurality of puzzle pieces in the puzzle. This adds 20 excitement and enjoyment for the player because the player may pick selection which reveals several puzzle pieces in the puzzles and thereby provides the player with multiple awards for a single selection. It should be appreciated that one puzzle piece or a plurality of puzzle pieces may be repeated in a puzzle.

In a further embodiment, a selection in the selection display may include two or more puzzle pieces in a puzzle. In this embodiment, the puzzle pieces associated with the selection may be the same or identical puzzle pieces or different puzzle pieces. In this embodiment, the player obtains a plurality of 5 puzzle pieces for a single pick of the selections in the selection display. As described above, this also adds excitement and enjoyment for the player in a game.

In another alternative embodiment, certain sections of the puzzle are associated with awards. In one aspect of this embodiment, at least one of the 10 rows of interconnected puzzle pieces are associated with a row award and at least one of the columns including interconnected puzzle pieces in the puzzle are associated with a column award. In another embodiment, each of the rows is associated with a row award and each of the columns is associated with a column award. The player picks selections to reveal puzzle pieces until all of 15 the puzzle pieces associated with a designated section such as a row or a column are revealed or obtained by the player. The player receives all of the awards associated with the puzzle pieces which form the designated row or column. In addition, the player receives the row award or column award associated with the completed designated section. In one embodiment, the 20 row award or column award received by the player is added to the awards associated with the puzzle pieces which form the completed designated row or column. In another embodiment, the row or column award is used to modify such as multiply the accumulated awards from the puzzle pieces which form 25 the completed designated row or column. It should be appreciated that the row or column award may be any suitable award and may modify the

accumulated awards associated with the puzzle pieces that form the completed designated section in any suitable manner.

In a further alternative embodiment, the puzzle initially displayed to the player at the beginning of a game includes puzzle pieces having awards which

5 are visible or viewable by the player. Thus, the player can see or view the awards associated with the each of the puzzle pieces in the puzzle before the player obtains any of the puzzle pieces. The player then can root for or particular puzzle pieces in the puzzle in order to obtain a large award or a relatively large award in the game. This adds further excitement and

10 enjoyment for the player in a game.

Although the present invention is discussed relative to a bonus game of a gaming machine, it should be appreciated that the present invention could be employed as a primary game in a gaming device.

It is therefore an advantage of the present invention to provide a gaming

15 device with an accumulated award selection bonus game.

A further advantage of the present invention is to provide a bonus game that enables players to accumulate larger awards from a single selection.

It is another advantage of the present invention to provide a selectable combination bonus game that enables players to pick selections to obtain one

20 of several interconnected combinations.

It is a further advantage of the present invention to provide a bonus game that enables players to receive awards for obtaining interconnected combinations.

It is another advantage of the present invention to provide a bonus

25 game that enables players to receive larger awards.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed disclosure, taken in conjunction with the accompanying sheets of drawings, wherein like numerals refer to like parts, elements, components, steps and processes.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1A is front plan view of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 1B is front plan view of another embodiment of the gaming device 10 of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a schematic block diagram of the electronic configuration of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 3 is an enlarged front elevation view of a display device displaying a plurality of selections of one embodiment of the present invention.

15 Fig. 4A is an enlarged front elevation view of the plurality of selections displayed at the start of a game.

Fig. 4B is an enlarged front elevation view of the display device illustrating a first pick by a player.

20 Fig. 4C is an enlarged front elevation view of the display device illustrating a second pick by a player that includes an accumulated award.

Fig. 4D is an enlarged front elevation view of the display device illustrating a third pick by a player that includes multiple accumulated awards.

Fig. 4E is an enlarged front elevation view of the display device illustrating a fourth pick by a player.

Fig. 4F is an enlarged front elevation view of the display device illustrating a fifth and final pick by a player.

Fig. 5 is an enlarged front elevation view of an alternative embodiment of the present invention wherein the display device illustrates a pick by a 5 player that accumulates awards from a row of selections.

Fig. 6 is an enlarged front elevation view of a further alternative embodiment of the present invention wherein the display device illustrates a pick by a player that accumulates awards from a predefined area of selections.

Fig. 7 is an enlarged front elevation view of another alternative 10 embodiment of the present invention wherein the display device illustrates a plurality of selection sets having accumulated awards.

Figs. 8A, 8B, 8C, 8D, 8E and 8F are enlarged front elevation views of a display device illustrating an example game of the alternative embodiment of Fig. 7 having a plurality of selection sets with accumulated awards.

15 Fig. 9 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 10 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an example of the embodiment of Fig. 9 where a player makes a first pick in the game.

20 Fig. 11 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating a second pick by the player.

Fig. 12 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating a third pick by the player.

25 Fig. 13 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating a fourth pick by the player.

Fig. 14 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating a fifth pick by the player.

Fig. 15 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating a sixth and final pick by the player.

5 Fig. 16 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating another alternative embodiment of the present invention where the display device includes a plurality of identical puzzle pieces.

10 Figs. 17A, 17B and 17C are enlarged front elevation views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an example of a game where a player only needs one puzzle piece to complete the game.

15 Fig. 18 is an enlarged front elevation view of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an alternative embodiment of the present invention where a plurality of row awards and a plurality of column awards are associated with the puzzle pieces.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Gaming Device and Electronics

5 Referring now to the drawings, two embodiments of the gaming device of the present invention are illustrated in Figs. 1A and 1B as gaming device 10a and gaming device 10b, respectively. Gaming device 10a and/or gaming device 10b are generally referred to herein as gaming device 10. Gaming device 10 is preferably a slot machine having the controls, displays and
10 features of a conventional slot machine. It is constructed so that a player can operate it while standing or sitting, and gaming device 10 is preferably mounted on a console. However, it should be appreciated that gaming device 10 can be constructed as a pub-style table-top game (not shown) which a player can operate preferably while sitting. Furthermore, gaming device 10
15 can be constructed with varying cabinet and display designs, as illustrated by the designs shown in Figs. 1A and 1B. Gaming device 10 can also be implemented as a program code stored in a detachable cartridge for operating a hand-held video game device. Also, gaming device 10 can be implemented as a program code stored on a disk or other memory device which a player
20 can use in a desktop or laptop personal computer or other computerized platform.

Gaming device 10 can incorporate any primary game such as slot, poker or keno, any of their bonus triggering events and any of the bonus round games. The symbols and indicia used on and in gaming device 10 may be in
25 mechanical, electrical or video form.

As illustrated in Figs. 1A and 1B, gaming device 10 includes a coin slot 12 and bill acceptor 14 where the player inserts money, coins or tokens. The player can place coins in the coin slot 12 or paper money or ticket vouchers in the bill acceptor 14. Other devices could be used for accepting payment such 5 as readers or validators for credit cards or debit cards. When a player inserts money in gaming device 10, a number of credits corresponding to the amount deposited is shown in a credit display 16. After depositing the appropriate amount of money, a player can begin the game by pulling arm 18 or pushing play button 20. Play button 20 can be any play activator used by the player 10 who starts any game or sequence of events in the gaming device.

As shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, gaming device 10 also includes a bet display 22 and a bet one button 24. The player places a bet by pushing the bet one button 24. The player can increase the bet by one credit each time the player pushes the bet one button 24. When the player pushes the bet one 15 button 24, the number of credits shown in the credit display 16 decreases by one, and the number of credits shown in the bet display 22 increases by one.

At any time during the game, a player may “cash out” and thereby receive a number of coins corresponding to the number of remaining credits by pushing a cash out button 26. When the player “cashes out,” the player 20 receives the coins in a coin payout tray 28. The gaming device 10 may employ other payout mechanisms such as credit slips redeemable by a cashier or electronically recordable cards which keep track of the player’s credits.

Gaming device 10 also includes one or more display devices. The embodiment shown in Fig. 1A includes a central display device 30, and the 25 alternative embodiment shown in Fig. 1B includes a central display device 30

as well as an upper display device 32. Gaming device 10 preferably displays a plurality of reels 34, preferably three to five reels 34 in mechanical or video form at one or more of the display devices. However, it should be appreciated that the display devices can display any visual representation or exhibition,

5 including but not limited to movement of physical objects such as mechanical reels and wheels, dynamic lighting and video images. A display device can be any viewing surface such as glass, a video monitor or screen, a liquid crystal display or any other display mechanism. If the reels 34 are in video form, the display device for the video reels 34 is preferably a video monitor.

10 Each reel 34 displays a plurality of indicia such as bells, hearts, fruits, numbers, letters, bars or other images which preferably correspond to a theme associated with the gaming device 10. Furthermore, gaming device 10 preferably includes speakers 36 for making sounds or playing music.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the general electronic configuration of gaming

15 device 10 preferably includes: a processor 38; a memory device 40 for storing program code or other data; a central display device 30; an upper display device 32; a sound card 42; a plurality of speakers 36; and one or more input devices 44. The processor 38 is preferably a microprocessor or microcontroller-based platform which is capable of displaying images, symbols

20 and other indicia such as images of people, characters, places, things and faces of cards. The memory device 40 can include random access memory (RAM) 46 for storing event data or other data generated or used during a particular game. The memory device 40 can also include read only memory (ROM) 48 for storing program code which controls the gaming device 10 so

that it plays a particular game in accordance with applicable game rules and pay tables.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the player preferably uses the input devices 44, such as pull arm 18, play button 20, the bet one button 24 and the cash out 5 button 26 to input signals into gaming device 10. In certain instances it is preferable to use a touch screen 50 and an associated touch screen controller 52 instead of a conventional video monitor display device. Touch screen 50 and touch screen controller 52 are connected to a video controller 54 and processor 38. A player can make decisions and input signals into the gaming 10 device 10 by touching touch screen 50 at the appropriate places. As further illustrated in Fig. 2, the processor 38 can be connected to coin slot 12 or bill acceptor 14. The processor 38 can be programmed to require a player to deposit a certain amount of money in order to start the game.

It should be appreciated that although a processor 38 and memory 15 device 40 are preferable implementations of the present invention, the present invention can also be implemented using one or more application-specific integrated circuits (ASIC's) or other hard-wired devices, or using mechanical devices (collectively referred to herein as a "processor"). Furthermore, although the processor 38 and memory device 40 preferably reside on each 20 gaming device 10 unit, it is possible to provide some or all of their functions at a central location such as a network server for communication to a playing station such as over a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), Internet connection, microwave link, and the like. The processor 38 and memory device 40 is generally referred to herein as the "computer" or 25 "controller."

With reference to Figs. 1A, 1B and 2, to operate the gaming device 10 in one embodiment the player must insert the appropriate amount of money or tokens at coin slot 12 or bill acceptor 14 and then pull the arm 18 or push the play button 20. The reels 34 will then begin to spin. Eventually, the reels 34 5 will come to a stop. As long as the player has credits remaining, the player can spin the reels 34 again. Depending upon where the reels 34 stop, the player may or may not win additional credits.

In addition to winning credits in this manner, preferably gaming device 10 also gives players the opportunity to win credits in a bonus round. This 10 type of gaming device 10 will include a program which will automatically begin a bonus round when the player has achieved a qualifying condition in the game. This qualifying condition can be a particular arrangement of indicia on a display device. The gaming device 10 preferably uses a video-based central display device 30 to enable the player to play the bonus round. Preferably, the 15 qualifying condition is a predetermined combination of indicia appearing on a plurality of reels 34. As illustrated in the five reel slot game shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, the qualifying condition could be the number seven appearing on three adjacent reels 34 along a payline 56. It should be appreciated that the present invention can include one or more paylines, such as payline 56, wherein the 20 paylines can be horizontal, diagonal or any combination thereof.

Bonus Game

Referring now to Fig. 3, one embodiment of the present invention is shown containing the elements of the present invention. The gaming device 25 displays a plurality of masked selections 102 to a player. In one embodiment,

the selections are arranged in an M by N matrix, where M equals the number of rows and N equals the number of columns in the matrix. Furthermore, M and N are integers having a value of one or greater. However, it should be appreciated that the plurality of selections may be configured into any shape or 5 design as desired. Each selection 102 includes either an associated award 104 (shown in phantom) or an associated accumulated award 106 (shown in phantom). The award 104 may be designated by a number or any other symbol as desired. Similarly, the accumulated award may be designated by a symbol, number, color or any other designation as desired. The player begins 10 the game by picking one of the masked selections 102. Once a masked selection is picked, the selection reveals an award 104 or an accumulated award 106 to the player. The selection remains highlighted and visible throughout the game.

The gaming device includes a selector (such as a touch screen or 15 electro-mechanical device as indicated above) which is connected to or in communication with the processor which enables the player to select the selections.

If the player picks an award 104, they receive the value of the award. In one embodiment, the award is designated by a number such as a number of 20 credits as shown in Fig. 3. However, it should be appreciated that the award may be a symbol, picture, sound or other designation that is linked to an award value or other prize. Once picked, the award value is transferred to an award display 110. The award display 110 indicates the accumulated value of all awards obtained by a player in a game.

The player may pick a selection that reveals an accumulated award 106. The accumulated award turns a single player selection into a larger award than associated with the selection picked by the player. When a player picks a selection that reveals an accumulated award in one embodiment, the 5 player receives the award values for all of the selections that are adjacent to the selection having the accumulated award. In some circumstances, as in Fig. 3, an accumulated award is not completely surrounded by selections. In this situation, the player receives the award values for the selections that are adjacent to the selection having the accumulated award. The player does not 10 receive awards for adjacent positions that do not include selections 102. Thus in Fig. 3, the player would receive the accumulated awards from the selections directly on the left, right, top of and diagonal to the selection having the accumulated award 106 because the accumulated award is located along an edge of the matrix.

15 The accumulated award may be designated by any symbol, number, sound or character as desired by the game implementor. Preferably, the accumulated award is designated by a symbol or shape that corresponds with the theme of the game. Also, it should be appreciated that the accumulated award may include other values besides the award values of the adjacent 20 selections. The accumulated award may be an award associated with the selection having the accumulated award, and may also include the awards from the selections that are in the same row or column as the selection having the accumulated award in the embodiment where the selections are in a column and row format. The accumulated award may also include any defined 25 grouping of selections as desired by the implementor. For example, the

accumulated award may include the awards from selections that are diagonal to the accumulated award, or only the selections that are below the accumulated award, if any. An accumulated award may also include another accumulated award, triggered by the first accumulated award.

5 The pick display 108 indicates how many picks are remaining in a game. Because the player starts a game with a limited number of picks, the player will continue to pick selections until there are no picks remaining in the game as displayed by pick display 108. When pick display 108 equals zero, the game ends. The player's goal is to accumulate as many awards as
10 possible before running out of picks. In an alternative embodiment, a terminator is also associated with the one or more of the selections having the accumulated awards. When a selection having an accumulated award and a terminator is selected, the accumulated award is provided to the player and the game ends. One or more anti-terminators which are accumulated by the
15 processor may be employed to nullify the effect of a terminator associated with one of the selections.

Now referring to Figs. 4A through 4F, an example game of one embodiment of the present invention is illustrated. In the beginning of the bonus game shown in Fig. 4A, a plurality of masked selections 102 are
20 displayed to the player on the display device 30 or 32 (see Figs. 1A and 1B). In this example, the selections 102 are arranged in a M by N matrix where M and N both equal six. However, it should be appreciated that M and N do not have to be equal and both M and N are integers having values of one or greater. Each masked selection 102 includes an award or an accumulated
25 award.

The player starts the game with five picks as shown in pick display 108. Thus, the player will pick five selections in the game. It should be appreciated that an award may include additional picks, opportunities, or other awards that extend the game. The pick display 108 will include any additional picks that 5 the player receives during the game. The player picks selections until all of their original and additional picks are gone.

The player initially does not have any awards in the game as indicated by award display 110. In some games, the player may have an award or awards to start a game. The awards are acquired in previous games and 10 remain with the player until the player is done playing the gaming device. However, the player starts out this game with zero and will attempt to obtain awards while picking selections in the game.

Referring now to Fig. 4B, the player picks a first selection 112 from the plurality of selections 102. The first selection reveals an award with a value of 15 ten. The player receives this award as indicated by award display 110. Also, the player now has four picks remaining as shown by pick display 108. Although the player received an award, their goal is to obtain several awards before the game ends. Thus, the player is hoping to pick a selection with an accumulated award because the accumulated award will provide multiple 20 awards to the player.

In Fig. 4C, the player obtains an accumulated award with the second pick of a selection. The accumulated award 114 reveals all of the awards associated with selections 115 related to and in this embodiment adjacent to the selection picked by the player having the accumulated award. The 25 accumulated award equals the sum of the awards associated with the adjacent

selections. The accumulated award is transferred to the award display 110. As a result, the player's total award for the game increases substantially. Prior to picking the accumulated award 114, the player had a total award of ten. After obtaining the accumulated award, the player has a total award of eighty-five. The accumulated award provides a much larger award to a player and increases the player's excitement and interest in the game. The player now has three picks remaining as shown in pick display 108 and the player will continue to pick selections to obtain more awards.

Referring to Fig. 4D, the player makes their third pick in the game. Again, the player picks a selection 102 that reveals an accumulated award 116. Now, the player obtains the awards associated with the selections adjacent to the selection having the accumulated award 116. One of the selections adjacent to the selection having the accumulated award also has an associated accumulated award 118. In this case, the player receives the award values of the selections adjacent to the selections with both accumulated awards 116 and 118, respectively. The total award value of the accumulated award associated with selection 116 is fifty-five, which includes the award value, if any, of the accumulated award 118. After adding this total to the total award for the game, the player has a total award value of one hundred forty as shown in award display 110. The player has two picks remaining in the game as indicated by the pick display 108.

In the above embodiment, an accumulated award 116 revealed another accumulated award 118. Each award associated with the selections adjacent to the accumulated awards are provided to the player. Overlapping awards 119 are counted one time. Therefore, the total award for picking the selection

having the accumulated award 116 is fifty-five (where the accumulated awards do not have associated awards). In an alternative embodiment, the overlapping awards 119 are counted twice. The player receives an award value of fifteen for the overlapping awards 119 after picking the accumulated award 116. Then the player receives another award of fifteen for the same overlapping awards 119 associated with the second accumulated award 118. Therefore in the alternative embodiment, the player receives a total award of seventy for picking the accumulated award 116. It should also be appreciated that each accumulated award could include an award associated with the selection of the accumulated award symbol.

A player receives a much larger award for each accumulated award. Therefore, a game that reveals multiple accumulated awards after only one pick by a player creates enhanced levels of player excitement. It should be appreciated that the number of accumulated awards is only limited by the number of selections. Each accumulated award may reveal zero, one or more accumulated awards in addition to awards of related selections.

In Fig. 4E, the player picks another selection 120 from the plurality of selections 102. The selection 120 reveals an award of five. Because the player did not obtain an accumulated award, the player receives an award of five for this pick. The award value of five is added to the player's total award for the game to give the player a new total award of one hundred forty-five as shown in award display 110. The player has one pick remaining in the game as indicated by pick display 108.

Referring now to Fig. 4F, the player makes their final pick in the game and picks selection 122, which reveals an accumulated award. The

accumulated award is located in a corner of the matrix. Thus, the player receives the awards associated with the selections related to or adjacent to the selection having the accumulated award. The total value of the three adjacent selections in the matrix is twenty-five. This award is added to the player's total
5 award which is one hundred seventy as shown in award display 110. The player is out of picks as indicated by pick display 108 and therefore the game ends.

Referring to Fig. 5, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the accumulated award includes the awards associated with
10 selections that are in the same row as the picked selection having the accumulated award. This figure shows how an implementor could change the awards revealed by an accumulated award. Here, the player picks the selection having the accumulated award 124, which in turn reveals the adjacent selections in row 125. The accumulated award equals twenty as
15 shown in award display 110.

In Fig. 6, yet another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the player picks a selection having an accumulated award 126 from the plurality of selections 102. The accumulated award reveals the awards 127 associated with the selections that are directly above, below, left and right of it.
20 The selections diagonal from the accumulated award location are not revealed. Thus, the implementor may alter the number and location of selections that are related to a picked selection having an accumulated award. The player receives a total award of forty for obtaining the accumulated award in this example as shown by award display 110.

In one embodiment of the present invention, a player receives an extra award for completing a row, column or other predefined area in the plurality of selections 102. For example, if a player picks a number of selections 102 that complete a row in the selection matrix, the player receives an extra award in 5 addition to the total awards associated with the revealed selections.

In another embodiment, the plurality of selections 102 include one or more terminators. In this embodiment, the gaming device enables a player to pick selections and obtain awards until the player picks a terminator. If the player picks a terminator, the game ends.

10 Now referring to Fig. 7, another embodiment of the present invention is shown where the plurality of selections are arranged in a pattern or design including a plurality of selection sets 103a to 103m. The pattern or design may be any pattern or design desired by an implementor and may include any number of selection sets 103. Each selection set 103 includes at least one 15 and preferably a plurality of selections 102. The object of this embodiment is to proceed from the first selection set 103a to the last selection set 103m using a limited number of picks as shown in pick display 108. The selections include awards 130 and accumulated awards 138. The awards include free picks, spins or credits.

20 One embodiment includes terminators 132, promoters 134 and transformers 136 associated with the selections. As described in relation to the above embodiment, when a player picks a selection, the player receives an award associated with that selection. If the player picks a selection having an accumulated award 138, the player receives the awards associated with the 25 selections 102 in the selection set of the picked selection. Thus, the selections

in a selection set are related for determining the accumulated award. In one embodiment, the game reveals each selection in the respective selection set that includes the accumulated award selection. In another embodiment, each selection set has a plurality of selections and an accumulated award reveals

5 the awards associated with the selections directly adjacent (or otherwise related) to the associated award selection.

If a terminator 132 is associated with a selection, the game ends when the terminator selection is picked by the player. However, if a player picks a transformer 136 before picking a terminator, the transformer changes the

10 terminator into an accumulated award. If this occurs, the player receives the awards associated with the selections 102 in the selection set. In other words, the terminator becomes an accumulated award after it is changed by a transformer 136. In one embodiment, each transformer 136 changes one terminator 132. However, it is contemplated that a single transformer may

15 change one or more terminators in a game.

The promoter 134 causes a player to skip a selection set and move closer to the end 103m. After a player skips a selection set, they receive another opportunity to pick a selection 102 in the next selection set. In one embodiment, the player does not lose a pick by obtaining the promoter. In one

20 embodiment, the promoter skips only one set 103. However, it should be appreciated that a promoter may cause a player to skip one or more sets as desired by the implementor.

A player's goal is to reach the final selection set, which in this example is selection set 103m, while accumulating as many awards as possible before

25 running out of picks. In one embodiment, the player receives a number of

picks that enable that player to possibly reach the final selection set 103m if the player picks the correct selections to achieve this result. In another embodiment, the picks may be designated arbitrarily or randomly, such that a player may need one or more promoters to reach the final selection set 5 because the player does not have enough picks at the beginning of the game to successfully pick a selection in each selection set to reach the final selection set.

In Fig. 7, the awards 130, terminators 132, promoters 134, transformers 10 136 and accumulated awards 138 are designated by certain characters, symbols or numbers. These designations are for illustration only and the game implementor may designate any suitable characters, symbols, numbers, pictures or sounds. Also, the awards 130, terminators 132, promoters 134, transformers 136 and accumulated awards 138 are preferably associated with probabilities such that any one of the selections has a greater probability of 15 being assigned to a selection 102 than another selection. Furthermore, a player preferably receives an additional award if the player reaches the final selection set 103m. It is contemplated that the player may only receive the total of the awards for the player's selections in each set or a bonus award for 20 making it to the final selection set. The bonus award may be extra spins, picks, games, multipliers or whatever award is desired by the game implementor.

Now referring to Figs. 8A through 8E, an example is shown where a player picks selections from a plurality of selection sets 103a to 103m that are displayed to the player. The selection sets are arranged into a p-shaped 25 pattern where each selection set includes a plurality of selections. The gaming

device provides the player with a limited number of picks as shown in pick display 108. The player must use those picks to pick a selection 102 in each selection set to try to get to the final selection set 103m. After each pick, the player may receive an award associated with the picked selection, which is 5 added to their total award for the game. As indicated above, the player may receive other designations such as a terminator, which ends the game. Thus, the player is provided with several alternatives and objectives in this embodiment, which increases the level of excitement and enjoyment of the game.

10 Specifically referring to Fig. 8A, the gaming device provides the player with five picks to begin the game. The pattern includes thirteen selection sets, 103a to 103m, having four selections 102 in each set. Therefore, since the player only has five picks and there are thirteen selection sets in the game, the player must obtain promoters to reach the final selection set 103m in this 15 game. The player's first pick is selection 142 in the first selection set 103a. The picked selection reveals an award of five, which is transferred to the award display 110. The player has four picks remaining to reach the final selection set 103m as shown in pick display 108.

20 The player picks the second selection 144 in the second selection set 103b as illustrated in Fig. 8B. This selection reveals an accumulated award. In this example, the accumulated award equals the revealed awards associated with the selections in the same selection set 103b as the accumulated award. The player receives the accumulated award of thirty for this pick. The award is transferred to the award display 110 to give the player 25 a total award of thirty-five for the game. Now with only three picks remaining

as shown in pick display 108, the player must attempt to pick several promoters to reach the final selection set 103m.

Referring now to Fig. 8C, the player makes their third pick in the game. The player picks selection 146 in the third selection set 103c. A transformer, 5 designated by a star, is associated with this selection. The transformer does not have an award associated with it; however, it should be appreciated that a transformer may include any type of award as desired by the game implementor.

The transformer changes a terminator into an accumulated award. The 10 transformer also acts like a free pick in the game by allowing the player to continue to pick selections even though the player picked a terminator. Normally, the terminator ends the game but with a transformer, the terminator reveals selections the same as an accumulated award. Until the player needs the transformer, it will be shown on display 30, 32 or on a separate display (not 15 shown) to indicate that the player has a transformer or transformers to use in the game if the player should pick a terminator selection.

In one embodiment, the number of transformers obtained by a player is indicated on one of the display devices by displaying the same number of transformer symbols on the display device. For example, if the player selects 20 two transformer symbols in a game, the display device will display two transformer symbols. If the player uses one of the transformers during the game, the display will display one transformer symbol to indicate to the player that the player only has one transformer remaining in the game. In another embodiment, the number of transformers obtained by the player is indicated by 25 a transformer display that is similar to the pick display 108. In this

embodiment, if the player obtains two transformers during the game, the transformer display will display the number two in the transformer display.

If the player obtains more than one transformer, each transformer is displayed to the player until the transformer is used in the game. The player's 5 award total remains unchanged and the player now has two picks remaining in the game as shown in pick display 108.

Referring to Figs. 8D and 8E, the player picks selection 148 in the fourth selection set 103d. This selection reveals a terminator, which is represented by an "X" in this example. The transformer changes or transforms the 10 terminator into an accumulated award as shown in Fig. 8E. Therefore, the other selections in selection set 103d are revealed to the player. The player receives an accumulated award of thirty, which is added to award display 110 to give a new total award of sixty-five. The player has one pick left in the game as indicated by pick display 108.

15 In Fig. 8F, the player uses the final selection in the game. The picked selection 150 reveals a promoter which is designated by the phrase "SKIP." The promoter acts like a free pick such that the promoter enables the player to skip the selection set 103e that includes the promoter. Now the player has an opportunity to pick a selection in the next selection set 103f. The player picks 20 selection 152 that reveals an award of ten. The player has no more picks. The player ends the game with a total award of seventy-five as indicated by award display 110.

It should be appreciated that the processor of the gaming device preferably randomly assigns the awards, accumulated awards, terminators, 25 transformers and promoters to the selections each time the game is played.

The processor could make these assignments from tables, based on weighted probabilities, or distributions, or in any other suitable manner.

In another embodiment of the present invention, the value of the awards associated with the selections in the selection sets increase as a player progresses to each subsequent set in the selection set pattern. For example, the maximum award in the first selection set is one. Then, the maximum award in the second selection set is five. As the player advances to a new selection set, the award associated with each new selection set increases by a predetermined amount. The player advances through the pattern until the player reaches the last selection set in the pattern, where the maximum award is one hundred. It should be appreciated that the award may increase by a predetermined amount or by a random amount. In this embodiment, a player's excitement and entertainment level increases as the player advances through the pattern of selection sets. It should also be appreciated that the ranges of awards could vary and the average values in each set could vary.

In one alternative embodiment, the chance, percentage or probability of termination may vary. In one such embodiment, the chance, percentage or probability of termination increases as the player advances through each set or group of selections. In another such embodiment, the chance, percentage or probability of termination is randomly determined or selected from a pool of such percentages for each set or group of selections.

An alternative embodiment of the bonus game of the present invention is generally illustrated in Fig. 3. Fig. 3 shows a display device 30 or 32, shown in Figs. 1A or 1B, as it would appear to a player at the beginning of a game. In this embodiment, an indicator display 200 includes several indicators 202. The

indicators 202 are in the form of puzzle pieces, which collectively form a puzzle. It should be appreciated that the indicators may be any suitable interconnecting shapes, symbols or images. In one embodiment, an award such as a value is associated with each puzzle piece 202. In one 5 embodiment, the awards associated with the puzzle pieces are masked or hidden at the start of the game. It should be appreciated that the awards may be values, credits, free spins, free games, multipliers, game elements or any other suitable award or outcome desired by the game implementor.

In one embodiment, the puzzle pieces 202 which form the puzzle are all 10 different. In another embodiment, the puzzle pieces include a predefined or predetermined relationship. In one aspect of this embodiment, at least two of the puzzle pieces in the puzzle are the same. In another aspect of this embodiment, a plurality of the puzzle pieces in the puzzle are the same. It should be appreciated that at least two of the puzzle pieces, a plurality of the 15 puzzle pieces or all of the puzzle pieces may be different.

The game also includes a selection display 204. In one embodiment, the selection display includes a plurality of selections 206, each of which are associated with an indicator or puzzle piece 202. For example, selection 208 is associated with puzzle piece 210. Preferably, each selection is associated 20 with one or more puzzle pieces 202. However, it should be appreciated that a selection may be associated with values, spins, credits or multipliers as well as puzzle pieces 202. As described above, the puzzle pieces such as the puzzle piece associated with selection 208 are initially masked or hidden from the player. Each puzzle piece 202 is revealed after a player picks the

corresponding selection 206 including the puzzle piece from the selection display 204.

The gaming device also includes an instruction display 213 which provides instructions and/or messages to the player in a game. The instruction display 213 may display any suitable instructions or messages to the player. Additionally, the gaming device includes an award display 212 that indicates the value of the awards that the player has accumulated in a game.

At the start of a game, the processor 38 randomly generates a puzzle 200 including several interconnected or matingly connected puzzle pieces 202. A player then picks one selection 206 from the selection display 204. Once a player picks a selection 206, the picked selection reveals a puzzle piece that matches a puzzle piece 202 on indicator display 200. The player receives the award, if any, associated with the picked puzzle piece 202. As described above, the award may be credits, free spins, free games, values, multipliers, game elements or any other suitable award or outcome. In addition, the awards may be weighted such that a player is more likely to receive one award than another award.

The object of the game is to complete a designated section of the puzzle 200 while accumulating awards during the game. The completed designated section may be a row, column or any other suitable section of the puzzle designated by the game implementor, and may vary with each game. In one embodiment, the player continues to pick selections 206 until they complete a designated section of puzzle pieces 202, such as a row or column of puzzle pieces. In one embodiment, the gaming device provides the awards associated with the puzzle pieces which form the completed row or column

and any indicated puzzle pieces which are directly or matingly connected to any of the puzzle pieces of the completed row or column.

Referring to Figs. 10 through 15, the present invention is illustrated by showing an example of several picks of the selections 204 by a player starting 5 from the initial pick to the final pick in a game. In Fig. 10, the indicator display 200 and selection display 204 are initially shown to a player on display devices 30 or 32. The processor 38 randomly displays a puzzle 200 including several matingly interconnected puzzle pieces to the player. The gaming device enables the player to pick selections 206 until the player completes at least 10 one of several different designated sections of the puzzle. In this embodiment, the designated sections of the puzzle include any matingly connected row or column of the puzzle pieces. Therefore, if a player picks selections which reveal puzzle pieces that complete a matingly connected row or column of the puzzle pieces in the puzzle, the game ends and the gaming device provides 15 the player with the awards associated with the puzzle pieces that form the row or column and the awards associated with the puzzle pieces that are matingly connected to the completed row or column.

In this example, the instruction display 213 instructs the player to "Pick One of the Selections" in the section display 204. The player picks selection 20 214 which reveals puzzle piece 216. Puzzle piece 216 has a value of ten. The award or awards associated with the revealed puzzle pieces are transferred to the player when the player obtains or reveals a designated section of puzzle pieces in the puzzle. Because the player has not completed a designated section of puzzle pieces in the game, the total award indicated by 25 the total award display 212 remains at zero. In this example, the picked

selection 214 is highlighted and remains visible to the player during the game. Similarly, the corresponding puzzle piece 216 is highlighted so that the player can see the section or sections that they are trying to complete. Preferably, the picked puzzle pieces and values remain visible to the player. However it 5 should be appreciated that only the puzzle pieces may be viewable by the player, and not the associated values of the puzzle pieces. The player now has one piece of the puzzle and must continue picking selections until the player completes a designated section (i.e., a row or column) of the puzzle.

In Fig. 11, the instruction display 213 instructs the player to "Pick 10 Another Selection." The player picks a second selection 218, which reveals puzzle piece 220 in the puzzle or indicator display 100. This puzzle piece has an award value of five. The player now has two pieces of the puzzle and must continue to pick selections 106 until the player completes a designated section of the puzzle 100.

15 Referring to Fig. 12, the instruction display 213 instructs the player to "Pick Another Selection." The player picks a third selection 222 and reveals puzzle piece 224. Puzzle piece 224 has an award value of ten and is the first piece that matingly connects to another piece in the puzzle. In fact, puzzle piece 224 connects to both puzzle pieces 216 and 220. At this point in the 20 game, the player is starting to form a section of the puzzle. Thus, the player's excitement and enjoyment of the game increases because the player only needs a few more of the puzzle pieces to complete a designated section in the game.

Referring to Fig. 13, the instruction display 213 instructs the player to 25 "Pick Another Selection" from the selection display 204. The player picks

selection 226 which reveals puzzle piece 228. This puzzle piece connects to puzzle piece 224 and has an award value of twenty. The player only needs to obtain one more puzzle piece to complete a row and end the bonus game.

Referring to Fig. 14, the instruction display 113 instructs the player to

5 "Pick Another Selection" from the selection display 204. The player picks selection 230 which reveals one of the corner puzzle pieces 232. Although the player ultimately desires to complete a designated section of the puzzle the player potentially will obtain a larger award by not picking the last puzzle piece in the row because in this example the player receives the awards associated

10 with the puzzle pieces in the designated section and any puzzle pieces which are matingly connected to the designated section. Therefore, if the player subsequently picks the selection which completes the row of puzzle pieces including puzzle piece 216, the player receives the award of twenty-five, the awards associated with the other puzzle pieces in the designated row and the

15 awards associated with the puzzle pieces matingly connected to the row. As a result, the player still has an opportunity to increase their total award in the game.

Referring to Fig. 15, the player picks selection 234, which is the last puzzle piece 236 in the row (i.e., the designated section). In this embodiment,

20 the bonus game ends when the player completes a designated section such as a row or column or some other defined section in the puzzle 200. Thus, the gaming device provides the player with a total award of seventy-five which includes the award for puzzle piece 236, which is five, and the sum of the awards associated with the other puzzle pieces in the row, which is forty (i.e.,

25 twenty plus ten plus ten) and the sum of the awards associated with the puzzle

pieces matingly connected to the row, which is thirty (i.e., five plus twenty-five). The total award of seventy-five is added to any awards that the player received in a previous game or games and indicated in the total award display 212.

As illustrated by this example, the player receives the total award for the 5 completed designated section or row including puzzle pieces 236, 216, 224 and 228, and any puzzle pieces matingly connected to that row, which are puzzle pieces 220 and 232. However, it should be appreciated that a player may receive the total award for the completed designated section only, and not the awards from the puzzle pieces which are matingly connected to the 10 completed designated section. For example, the player would have received a total award of forty-five instead of seventy-five without including the awards from the matingly connected puzzle pieces which are not part of the completed row. Therefore, a game implementor may vary the award possibilities as desired.

15 In another alternative embodiment, each of the pieces of the puzzle which are the puzzle 200 include awards which are visible or viewable by the player. The player can then root for certain puzzle pieces to be revealed when the player picks the selections 206 because those pieces are associated with a desirable award or awards such as a large award. It should be appreciated 20 that a single puzzle piece, a plurality of puzzle pieces or all of the puzzle pieces may include a visible or viewable award in a game.

Referring now to Fig. 16, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the indicator display or puzzle 200 includes a plurality of identical puzzle pieces. In this embodiment, the player picks the selection 25 such as selection 237 from the selection display 204. A puzzle piece

associated with selection 237 occurs a plurality of times in the puzzle 200. Specifically, puzzle pieces 238, 240 and 242 are identical to the puzzle piece associated with selection 237. Therefore, selection 237 reveals a plurality of identical puzzle pieces in the puzzle 200. As a result, the players excitement 5 and enjoyment of the game increases because the player obtains several puzzle pieces with the pick of one selection from the selection display 204. It should be appreciated that one puzzle piece or a plurality of puzzle pieces may be repeated or be identical in a puzzle in a game. Additionally, it should be appreciated that any suitable number of identical puzzle pieces may be 10 included in the puzzle 200.

In an alternative embodiment, one or more of the selections 206 in the selection display 204 include a plurality of puzzle pieces. The puzzle pieces may be the same or identical puzzle pieces or different puzzle pieces. In this embodiment, the player obtains a plurality of puzzle pieces in the puzzle 200 15 by picking a single selection 206 in the selection display 204. Similar to the embodiment described above, the players excitement and enjoyment of the game increases because the player obtains a plurality of puzzle pieces in the puzzle from a single pick of the plurality of selections in the selection display 204.

20 Referring now to Figs. 17A to 17C, an example of one embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where a player only needs to reveal and obtain one more puzzle piece in the puzzle 200 to complete a designated section of the puzzle and receive a plurality of awards in the game. Specifically, in this embodiment, the gaming device provides the awards 25 associated with any puzzle pieces obtained by the player in the puzzle that

form a designated section such as a row or column in the puzzle and also any puzzle pieces which are matingly connected to the designated section completed by the player. Therefore, a player wants to obtain as many puzzle pieces as possible before completing a designated section such as a row or

5 column in the game to obtain the largest possible number of awards.

Referring to Fig. 17A, the player has already picked several selections 106 which revealed several puzzle pieces in the puzzle 200. Specifically, the player only needs to obtain one more puzzle piece such as puzzle piece 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305 or 307 to complete a designated section in the puzzle.

10 If the player picks a selection which reveals puzzle pieces 300, 301 or 302, the player obtains the awards associated with all of the puzzle pieces that are matingly connected to the designated section or column including those puzzle pieces and any puzzle pieces matingly connected to that completed row. Similarly, if the player picks a selection which reveals either puzzle piece 303,

15 304 or 305, the player obtains the awards associated with the puzzle pieces that form the designated section or row and all of the puzzle pieces matingly connected to that designated section or row. Therefore, the player will obtain a larger award if the player picks a selection including puzzle pieces 300, 301 or 302 because the player will obtain more awards. Conversely, the player will

20 only obtain the awards associated with the puzzle pieces primarily in the upper portion of the puzzle if the player obtains puzzle pieces 303, 304 or 305 and not the puzzle pieces on the lower or bottom row of the puzzle because none of the lower puzzle pieces are matingly connected to that completed section. Therefore, the player wants to obtain either puzzle piece 300, 301 or 302 in the

25 puzzle. The players excitement and enjoyment in the game increases when

one puzzle piece determines whether the player obtains a large award in a game.

Fig. 17B illustrates an example where the player picks a selection 306a which reveals a puzzle piece that is included in one of the designated sections 5 which includes a smaller number of puzzle pieces. Specifically, the player picks selection 306a which reveals puzzle piece 307 in the puzzle 200. The gaming device provides the player with the awards associated with the matingly connected puzzle pieces which form the designated section or row including puzzle piece 307. Therefore, the gaming device provides the player 10 with an award of seventy-five which is indicated by the award display 212. The award of seventy-five includes the awards of ten, twenty-five, fifteen, twenty and five associated with the puzzle pieces which form the completed designated section by the player. The player however would receive a much larger award if the player picked a selection including puzzle piece 302 15 because this puzzle piece is interconnected to more pieces in the puzzle. Therefore, this example illustrates how one piece may determine whether the player obtains a relatively large award or a relatively small award in a game.

Referring to Fig. 17C, another example of the embodiment shown in Fig. 17A is illustrated where the player picks selection 306b which reveals 20 puzzle piece 302 and thereby completes a designated section or column in the puzzle 200. The gaming device provides the player with the awards associated with the puzzle pieces that form the designated column and all of the awards associated with the puzzle pieces that are matingly connected to the completed designated column. As a result, the gaming device provides the 25 awards associated with all of the puzzle pieces that have been obtained by the

player in the game which is the largest possible award in this game. The total award of two hundred fifty as indicated by the award display 212 is much larger than the total award of seventy-five obtained by the player in the example in Fig. 17B. Therefore, one puzzle piece may determine whether the 5 player obtains a very large award or a smaller award in the game. This adds to the players excitement and enjoyment of the game.

Referring to Fig. 18, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated where the gaming device provides a plurality of row awards 400 associated with the rows of matingly connected puzzle pieces and a plurality of 10 column awards 402 associated with the matingly connected puzzle pieces which form the columns in the puzzle 200 in a game. In this embodiment, the gaming device provides the player with the awards associated with all the matingly interconnected puzzle pieces which form the completed designated row or column in a game and also the row award or column award associated 15 with the completed designated section. For example in Fig. 18., a player picks selection 404 which reveals puzzle piece 406 in the puzzle 200. Puzzle piece 406 completes a row of puzzle pieces in the game. Thus, the gaming device provides the player with the sum of the awards associated with the puzzle pieces in the row, which is sixty, and the puzzle piece matingly connected to 20 the row, which is five. The total award associated with the puzzle pieces is sixty-five. The gaming device also provides the row award of one hundred to the player for completing the row associated with this row award. The total award obtained by the player is therefore one hundred sixty-five as indicated by the total award display 212. The above embodiment provides the player 25 with an additional award in the game which increases the players excitement

and enjoyment of the game. In one embodiment, the row award or column award is added to the accumulated award associated with the puzzle pieces that form the completed designated section in a game. In another embodiment, the row award or column award is used as a multiplier to modify 5 or multiple the accumulated awards associated with the puzzle pieces that form the completed designated column or row in the game. It should be appreciated that the row or column awards may modify the accumulated award in any suitable manner.

While the present invention is described in connection with what is 10 presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it should be appreciated that the invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments, and is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the claims. Modifications and variations in the present invention may be made without departing from 15 the novel aspects of the invention as defined in the claims, and this application is limited only by the scope of the claims.